

423 society. This was not so among the Ngoni. We know little about the way in which rights in cultivated and grazing-lands, hunting-rights and rights to water were distributed in the old Ngoni State, but if the present position is any guide, it seems likely that there was no well-developed system of land-holding. After dwelling in 360 any one area for five years or so, the tribe moved on, partly because [311] the fertility of the soil had been exhausted and partly for other reasons. Thus rights to land did not endure; land itself was expendable. What endured was merely the pattern of residential settlement, the arrangement of people in clusters and divisions and villages. Men and women lived where they belonged in the segmentary residential system, and relative geographical position did not determine, but was determined by, political affiliation.

557 Power in the State was thus power over people rather than 631 over natural resources. It is true that cattle were valuable, but 231 even they appear to have been eaten rather more often than in many tribes in which cattle are a form of wealth and investment rather [262] than a regular item of diet. Furthermore, there was the doctrine [422] that all cattle belonged to the Paramount Chief, so that village [643] headmen with cattle in their byres held them, as it were, only by favour of the chief. The principal index of power was the number of a man's dependants. Political struggles were essentially not [668] struggles to control wealth but to enjoy the support of followers. The main source of dependants was from raiding, and hence the [727] allocation of captives was crucial to the working of the social system.

Fraser writes of the northern Nyasaland Ngoni, that warriors 727 kept their own captives.¹ This does not seem to have been the usual procedure among the Fort Jameson group. Although some informants spoke as if they, or their forebears, had been actually taken by the person who became their lord, others said that in [643] general all captives belonged to the Paramount Chief, and that he could allocate them as he wished; usually, however, he allocated them to the warriors who had captured them. It was a specific privilege of regional governors to keep their own captives. It seems probable that the Paramount Chief's allocations were made to the heads of segments to which the warriors belonged, for many of my informants were said to have been captured by a few people, some of whom are described by contemporary travellers as generals and war-leaders, and who are unlikely to have made many front-line captures themselves. Moreover, it seems that on small raids [721] organized by the head of a major segment, not on a national scale,

¹ Fraser, *Primitive people*, p. 37.

captives were retained within the segment. In later years, at least, small-scale raiding organized by segment heads went on without the Paramount Chief's knowledge and it seems unlikely under those conditions that captives would have been sent in to him. [727] [721]

There is confirmatory evidence from other Ngoni groups. Hodgson wrote of the Dowa group that a warrior who had captured three or more people had one returned to him by the chief,³ from which we may infer that they were at the disposal of the chief. For the Southern Ngoni, who are not so closely related to the Fort Jameson group as are those in northern Nyasaland and Dowa District, Read wrote that the Paramount Chief had a monopoly of slaves taken in war and that he distributed these to successful warriors, his wives and his relatives.³ [643]

Cattle were handled in much the same way as captives. There was a dogma that all cattle belonged to the Paramount Chief, but they were dispersed among the different villages and kept in the byres there. The lord of a major segment had effective control of the cattle in his own village and, when he chose to exercise it, in the other villages of his segment as well. When the Paramount Chief visited a village, cattle were killed in his honour and he was praised as the giver of the feast, but in the chief's absence the head of the village decided when beasts were to be killed. A lord appointed his lieutenants to look after his cattle as well as his people. When cattle had been taken on a raid, they were driven back to Ngoniland and then allocated to a lord. [231] [422] [643] [727]

Cattle for bridewealth were provided for a man by his lord. However it seems possible that a large proportion of the marriages made by politically unimportant people were not ratified by the passage of cattle.⁴ [583] [231]

Such evidence as there is suggests that the Ngoni consumed their cattle faster than many similar cattle people and, as with dependants, they captured cattle more than they reared them. People speak of the days before the conquest as a time when they lived entirely on meat and beer. Poole suggests that the Ngoni produced little or no food in their own country,⁵ and while this is plainly contradicted by contemporary evidence, it is probable that they did rely on raiding to supplement their supplies of cattle and cereals, and that therefore many captured cattle were used as food. Thus cattle themselves were a short-term asset and the control of [231] [262] [727]

³ Hodgson, 'Dowa District', p. 153.

³ Read, 'Standards of Living', p. 30.

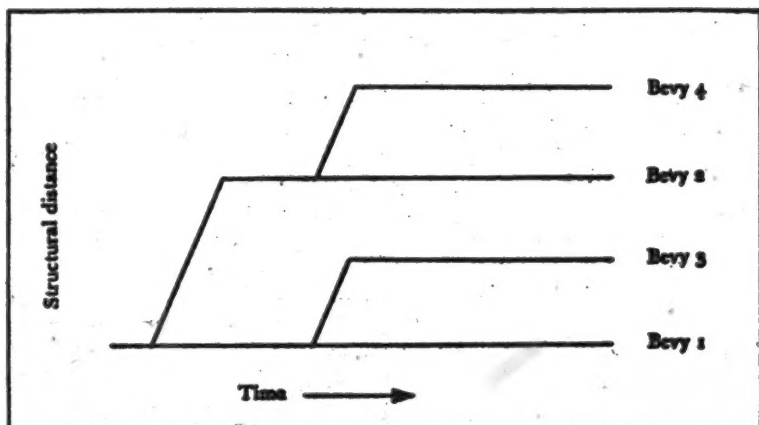
⁴ cf. Barnes, *Marriage*, pp. 7-8.

⁵ Poole, 'Human geography of Lundazi and Petauke', p. 13.

231 cattle did not give rise to any cleavage of interest which was not
262 already present in the residential system.
727

[557] The system could also be manipulated by disputes about
595 succession. If a man had many bevy's of wives there was usually no
611 doubt concerning which was the senior bevy and who was the great
wife in it. Yet in general it was not possible to rank a man's bevy's
in a simple linear order of seniority, any more than the segments

DIAGRAM 3. RANKING OF BEVIES



to which they corresponded could be ordered in this way. In topological terms, ranking of bevy's and of segments among the Ngoni was only partially, not simply, ordered. An example, illustrated in Diagram 3, will make this clear.

Suppose a man started with bevy 1 and then took part of it to form bevy 2. Later he took another part of bevy 1 to form bevy 3 and took part of bevy 2 to form bevy 4. With four bevy's of wives, his senior bevy was bevy 1 and his great wife was the leader of bevy 1. Her eldest son was his principal heir, and if she had no sons the eldest son by the next wife in her bevy became heir. But suppose there was no son by any wife in bevy 1. Which band provided the principal heir? It seems clear that bevy 4 did not, at least not if there were sons in bevy 2, for bevy 2 was senior to bevy 4. Bevy 2 might be regarded as senior to bevy 3, for it was formed from bevy 1 earlier. On the other hand, with reference to bevy 2, bevy 3 was merely a part of bevy 1 and hence the search for heirs should be continued in bevy 3 before shifting to bevy 2. Unfortunately I

INTRODUCTION

22

183 The national ritual of the first-fruits ceremony (*incwala*), which brought all
178 the people to the royal village, was also abandoned before the Ngoni
kingdoms were finally established, for no old person alive in the 1930's
had seen the *incwala* ceremony.

(d) *The ceremonial pattern*

533 Ngoni songs and dances were performed without the accompaniment
535 of drums and the words of the songs sung in the 1930's were in the
Ngoni language. The war-dance, *ligubo*, was still danced at the royal
village and at the funerals of Paramounts and Royal Sisters. The *ngoma*
dance, performed after the harvest by young men and girls, was encour-
aged by the two Ngoni Paramounts, who endeavoured to prohibit other
dances which were not of Ngoni origin.

292 Ceremonial dress, especially the war-dress of the men, was well pre-
301 served by heads of clans in the 1930's in the central Ngoni kingdom. In
both kingdoms the Ngoni leading women wore their traditional bead
ornaments on the head and neck and arms, and tied their cloths on
festive occasions in the way in which their ancestors wore the long
lengths of soft dressed leather.

- 262 Only in Ngoni families were to be found the making of milk curds
(*amasi*), the cooked blood (*ulubende*), and the stamped maize (*izinkobe*),
all of which were traditional foods brought by them from the south.

(e) *The linguistic pattern*

197 In the 1930's the Ngoni language had almost disappeared as a home
language, except in Chief Mperembe's area in the northern kingdom.
The majority of the older men could still speak and understand Ngoni,
and nearly all the men who had been away to work in Southern Rhodesia
or the Transvaal had renewed their knowledge of Ngoni or learnt to
understand it from working with men who spoke Ndebele, Zulu or
126 Swazi. The texts in this book from the northern kingdom were given in
the Ngoni language and translated for me by Y. M. Cibambo. His own
192 texts were written for me in English. The texts from the central kingdom
197 were given in Nyanja and translated by me. The vernacular terms used
in this book illustrate the continued use of Ngoni terms for traditional
offices and objects, though in the central kingdom many of these were
being replaced by Nyanja terms. Words of traditional songs, some ritual
formulae, some forms of address, some titles of senior persons or groups
—all these were in Ngoni. The younger generation, however, especially
[194] if they had not been south and heard Zulu or Ndebele, were not able to
make any of the clicks, or to pronounce such double consonants as *dl*
and *hl*.

576 The Ngoni were punctilious about etiquette, and especially about the
linguistic terms required by good manners for greeting persons of
different rank and seniority, thanking for gifts or for an audience, taking

THE NGONI POLITICAL SYSTEM

539 ³⁶ *the*
 727 salutation being 'Anehlo amhlope', 'Eyes are white', or 'Buyani', 'Return',
 [576] along with the clan name. The answer was 'Yebo' also with the clan name.
 This was the custom in the houses where there had been no death. The
 warriors of a village where there had been a death, either in the village or
 killed in war, took off their equipment on leaving the kraal and went to
 the house of mourning.

The warriors' sections went to the head villages of their districts to tell
 the news and show themselves. Those of Ekwendeni there; of Echigodhi-
 weni there; of Elangeni there; of Emcisweni there; but the sections from
 the villages of the *amakhanda* went together first of all to show themselves
 539 to the head villages and then went to their own villages. After the army
 727 had broken up, those who had killed a man or had helped to kill a man
 783 began a purification of four or five days for they were considered to be
 [824] unclean. After the time of greetings in the village, the elders came with
 the bark of certain trees which had been ground or crushed and put it in
 a frying pan. The frying pan was put on three hearth-stones by the fire,
 and water poured on. When the water began to boil the men came and
 began to 'lick the medicine', first one hand and then the other. The first
 lick they spat out, then they swallowed some, and struck their palms on
 their knees and on their elbows. They jumped from side to side of the
 frying pan and as they did so, they said 'Po'. This was said to drive away
 the spirits of the enemies whom they had killed because they were afraid
 that they might come to trouble them in sleep at night.

Very early in the morning they went to the river to wash off the paint,
 but they still wore the clothes of the men killed. This showed they were
 [824] still being purified. They did not live with their wives or touch their
 children. When they returned from the river they tried to repeat the
 words they had heard their enemies say. Back in the village they took more
 of their medicine from the frying pan saying 'Po'. After that they rubbed
 themselves all over with lime wash.

On the last day they went to the river again but when they had bathed
 they burned all they were wearing, or hung them in trees. Only the good
 things were left: cloth, ivory bracelets, bows and spears. The clothes of the
 killed they gave to the old people to wear. If water did not take off the
 paint on their bodies they rubbed on fat from cattle. Then the days of
 taboo were completed, they were considered to be clean, and could live
 with their wives and hold their children.

The decoration of heroes

539 After the warriors had been sent to the villages a short time passed,
 703 then they were called again together to dance the *ligubo*. On that day bulls
 [812] were chosen to be killed for the army. Each section received a bull and it
 was killed by the hero of the section. While it was being skinned and
 cooked all the companies were dancing. When the meat was cooked and
 taken off the fire all the army was busied with eating it, each company by
 itself. When they had eaten the warriors began to get up one by one to
 dance and leap before their Paramount. Then the heroes of the sections
 [823] were presented with the horns of the bull killed for the section. The horns
 had had holes bored so that bark-rope could be drawn through and they

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644
[78] water and the pyre, he was refusing, saying 'No, not in these days, but formerly.'

When Magona Ngozo was with Cikusi he was staying with him in the daytime. Magona had his own huts and Cikusi his. When eating, Cikusi ate alone, but afterwards he gave food to Magona. When Cikusi was washing it was together with Magona. When he went to the bush, they went together. When Cikusi was washing with the *tonga*, he was doing it with Magona. When the warriors were going out, Cikusi and Magona stood together, and they made fire for the medicines and they stood together in the smoke and then the warriors went out. So, when mentioning Magona, they said: 'the shadow of Cikusi'. When they were eating in the *bepalo*, the *nsima* (porridge) was brought to Cikusi, but if some *alumuzana* came, the wives of Magona cooked *nsima* and gave it to the *alumuzana*. When Cikusi died, Magona could take his wives if he wanted. The Ngozo man could tell the Paramount anything, good or bad, and stay like the mouth of the Paramount.

[762] When the Paramount died formerly, the Ngozo man dressed in his war-dress. When he came near the fire he danced with the shield in his hand. When the fire blazed up he ran and jumped on the fire. So the Maseko people gave cattle to the Ngozo people, to quieten their hearts because they were brothers. And when another Paramount was installed they gave an Ngozo man to stand with him. The father of the man who died with the Paramount received cattle and villages to rule over and gifts. The Paramounts gave cattle because they said: 'Since our brother is going to stand with the Paramount, if that Paramount dies, he also will be killed, so the Paramount ought to give cattle like *lobola* so they may quieten the hearts of his brothers.' Though these cattle are not given for a woman but for a man, any Maseko man ought not to marry an Ngozo woman because there is this brotherhood.

And this man of the Ngozo clan was like a chief because he had men to manage his affairs at his door, as did the Paramount. And if he died his funeral was like that of a chief. But the day the Paramount died the Ngozo man was killed. When the Paramount washed with medicines, he was washing with the Ngozo man. When drinking beer, he was drinking in the same hut as the Paramount. When the Paramount was sacrificing he was together with the Ngozo man, and they did not leave each other.

● [62] The Ngozo people have a thanking name (*isibongo*) Maphonya. It is they who were standing with the Paramounts, and the Ngozo people were in the section of Ziyembe. Their avoidances were the same as all the Ngoni, especially fish and elephant. When Cikusi died Gulo stood with Gomani when he entered the chieftainship. Gulo was the son of Magona.

The royal village and the daily routine of the Paramount

643 In Part I, Chapter II we referred to the process by which each Paramount, after his accession, went out from his father's village to build
361 his own. The Ngoni called this *ukupumisa inkosi* (to send out the Para-
644 mount) and the term used for the new village, *lusungulu* (the needle), was said to signify 'the front village where you expect to find the Paramount'.

THE ROYAL WOMEN

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Chief Mtwalo II in the northern kingdom. Two texts are by former big wives of leading men. NyaNaangu was the former big wife of a grandson of Zwangendaba, a member of the royal clan but not a chief, though he owned many villages. NaNdumbu was the former big wife of the head of the Nzunga clan in the central kingdom. The last text by Cibambo gives details of the clothes worn by royal women and leading women in pre-European days, some of which were still in use in the 1930's.

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644
631LIFE OF THE ROYAL WOMEN
by Manga Maseko159
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daughter of Mputa, former Paramount of the central kingdom

¶ Formerly I was just staying for I did not work. I had many slaves and their work was especially to thread beads. Up to today I have not worked except to cook. Our hair was anointed with the fat of cows and of milk. Our food was milk and we drank it in a wooden cup. We were getting cloth when they sold slaves to the Arabs. For honouring each other, the big men were telling the youths: 'You should honour the big people that the country may be rich.' Only the big women were dancing *ngoma*, *mindu* and *ligudo*. If a man married the child of a chief, he gave many cattle, and the poor man could not marry the child of a chief.

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644
[302]
[262]

When NaMlangeni was alive she was a well-known chief and was greatly honoured. When speaking a case, they called her that she might judge. When people went to war and captured slaves and cattle they were giving them to her, and she divided them. For thanking her they said: 'Zaithwa Mai.'

LIFE OF THE ROYAL WOMEN
by Margaret Jere

granddaughter of Mtwalo I, daughter of Johanne Jere in the northern kingdom

¶ When I was a child I was not allowed to go out quickly in the sun, and when crawling I had to stay in the house. I was very light coloured. The *mlesi* (nurse girl) took me to my mother, UNSulazi Nzima, to be suckled at special times. I slept in the house of Magodise Moyo, my grandmother, who was the widow of Chief Mtwalo. The *isidandani* (attendant) also slept there. My grandmother and others, the *manina* (senior women), were telling me how to behave. A special *isidandani* living in Magodise's house was told by my grandmother to speak specially to me when I had reached puberty. This *isidandani* could speak to me about anything. When nearing marriage a woman was chosen, Hlamseya Nzima, and sent to reveal to me how I was to live in my married state. The sisters of my father, Tinzira and Sayeya Jere, also came and spoke to me at the time of my marriage. Hlamseya Nzima was sent by my grandmother to examine me (for virginity) before marriage. I was allowed to play with those children who lived in the same section of the village and who were known to my mother and grandmother. The *isidandani* did all the work but sometimes I used to pound and fetch water, but not too hard and just for pleasure.

When strangers came, I came and saluted them and then went out of

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159 the house. If my father came to my mother's house, I would go out, but
 565 if he sent for me I would return and he would talk to me and play with
 631 me. We learned how to behave well, and were rebuked if we behaved
 644 badly. My father would beat a child for not behaving well. My father did
 not allow his children to be spoiled by being treated differently from
 others. He said: 'They are all my children.'

LIFE OF THE ROYAL WOMEN
by Mdingase Neangu

widow of Chinombo Jere, grandson of Zwangendaba in the
 northern kingdom

565 ¶ The *amahosikazi* were not working. During the day they kept dressing
 631 their hair, both the young women and the old. The old women no longer
 644 kept their *inhlutu*, or high chignon, but wore the *umzoco*, or long curls.
 [309] For the *umzoco* the hair was cut short, and not allowed to grow very long.
 Instead of dressing it upwards they took a blade of grass and kept it
 pressed down after oil and scent were applied. Their other work was to
 go to the river and wash.

They also drank beer and some gruel, and afterwards danced *ngoma* in
 the house where beer was brewed. The men and chief also joined in the
ngoma and the women were responding to the singing. They began to
 drink in the morning until the afternoon, but not in the evening. Other
 people went on drinking until evening, and even some of the *amahosikazi*
 who were *izidli* (gluttonous) but the rest were sleeping or resting.

When drinking in the house the chief always sat by the right-hand door-
 post, and the big *inkosikazi* by the left-hand post. They sat near the door
 to draw breath easily because there were many people inside. The beer-
 pot being set halfway between the door and the hearth-stones in the
 centre, a man was chosen to pour the beer in the gourds for drinking. He
 was *umtele wocwala*, the beer pourer, and was often the village *induna* or
 one who was favoured by the chief. When the gourds were full he told the
 chief, and the chief told him to distribute them. Sometimes there were
 four or even six for the different classes in the house. They sat in order,
 the *inkosi* with the *izinduna* and *amadoda*, and the *inkosikazi* with the other
 wives of the chief and the wives of the *izinduna* and *amadoda*. The chief
 and the *inkosikazi* kept on inviting the common people to come and drink.
 [576] Such invited people thanked the person at the beginning and at the end,
 others joining him. The *inkosikazi* or other wives of the chief were
 thanked 'Nkomo'.

The *amahosikazi* never worked at all, but the lesser wives worked, and
 pounded grain and fetched firewood. These were the ones who had not
 yet got attendants in their houses. All the chief *amahosikazi* had attendants
 who performed all the work of the house. The *amahosikazi* often sat in the
 verandah or outside under the platform of branches supported by posts.

567 There they ate their food which was *ilambasi* and *umjinji*, thick gruel of
 millet; *izinkwa* or *nyauti*, bulrush millet ground to a paste; or *izinkobe*,
 whole grains of maize boiled and pounded. The meat was eaten as a feast
 on the *egcekeni*, the smeared place in front of the house, and all the chief's
 wives joined in. A mat was spread for the big *amahosikazi* where they sat

614 *mulumuzana* was not invariable. Some informants said that *alumuzana*
622 were appointed by the Paramount. Others said that if the ancestor of a Swazi clan was known by name to have crossed the Zambesi with Zwangendaba or Mputa then his descendant in the direct line was always a *mulumuzana*.

614 It was the criterion of having a known ancestor and knowing the
[769] genealogy of the clan that was most widely accepted in acknowledging the head of a Swazi clan as *mulumuzana*. At the clan head village prayers were addressed to this ancestor, his cattle were sacrificed, and the names recited as far back as tradition and memory could recall. Later we shall see that there were said to be about 25 Swazi clans in the northern kingdom and 29 in the central. Among these about 15 in the northern and 12 in the central kingdom had head villages where the ancestor cult was performed. In the central kingdom several of the leading clans had their head villages in Portuguese territory, and therefore did not carry out the cult in the central kingdom.

554 In the hierarchy of the clans the Swazi clans were the acknowledged
614 leaders. In village and national life this leadership was accorded to the royal clans and the clans of the chiefs, and was the reason for the respect shown to *alumuzana* who had no direct political power. Only the heads of Swazi clans possessed *isitokozo* (honorific epithets) which commemorated events in the past history of the clan leaders. On all ceremonial occasions heads of Swazi clans, whether in national or in village affairs, took precedence over the rest when walking in procession, standing for dances, taking part in ritual, or sitting down at feasts. Certain forms of burial, such as the use of a sheep-skin, and placing the corpse on a shelf in the grave, were observed only for members of the Swazi clans.

582 In arranging marriages, there was, in addition to strict exogamy
614 within a clan, a prohibition on marriage between clans which had *cibale* (brotherhood) relations. In the central kingdom the royal clan, Maseko, had *cibale* with the Ngozo clan which provided the royal shadow, and with the Nzunga clan. The Nzunga and the Maseko clans shared the same taboos, notably elephant and fish. As well as prohibited marriages between certain clans, there were preferred marriages between certain others. In general there was a preference for marriage between the families of leading Swazi clans. In the northern kingdom the Nqumayo clan had a preference for marrying into the Thole, Nhlane, Maluleka and Pakati clans. It was alleged that formerly they could marry only into these clans, but in the 1930's exceptions were found in a number of villages.

614 The following lists of the names of Swazi clans were collected from informants in the two kingdoms, who were questioned closely about which names should be included under the title of Swazi. This was the grouping claimed by the Ngoni in both kingdoms. They said emphatic-

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cattle never came back to the kraal in the evening without one or more of the senior men standing by the gate and watching them and counting them as they went in. Sick cattle were noted and the herd-boys questioned about them. Mating was observed and noted, but not regulated, though poorly developed male beasts were sometimes castrated by one of the men who had acquired skill as a cattle doctor. Such a man would also administer drenches and other medicines, but the responsibility for calling a *sing'anga*, the specialist in medicines, to perform a ritual for a sick beast was taken by the whole group. They also made the decision to call a *sing'anga* to protect the kraal against lions. On several occasions I was in a village where lions attempted to get into the kraal at night, and the next morning the senior men who were responsible for the herd discussed the efficacy of this or that man's 'lion medicine' and decided who should be sent for to make the kraal safe again.

Important decisions were taken from time to time about placing the cattle belonging to the herd of a house in other kraals. This custom of *kuhikilila* (lit. to entrust) was common in the central kingdom and had been adapted to modern needs as one means of evading the cattle-tax by appearing to have few cattle, whereas a number were boarded out in other areas. This boarding out was a long-established custom of the Ngoni and was practised for various reasons. One reason, and probably the most important formerly, was to build up good relations with leading men in the outlying villages by entrusting cattle to their care. The reward if the cattle thrived was often the gift of a beast, and this was one means by which men of local tribes could build up a herd. It was also a signal honour to have cattle entrusted in this way and it was acknowledged by sending to such a 'keeper' the head of any beast killed from this herd. Another reason for boarding out was to prevent diseases spreading among a whole herd all kept in one kraal, and yet another was a belief that certain men had latent power with cattle, and that beasts put in their care thrived and multiplied. This emphasis on enlarging the herds by natural increase was the main motive for letting the calves have all the milk they needed in order that they might thrive.

The uses of cattle and cattle products

Many of the uses to which cattle were put and for which they were greatly valued have been referred to in this chapter and in earlier sections of this book. We shall now examine the consumption of meat, milk and blood as food, and the forms of exchange in which cattle were directly exchanged or converted into cash. The ritual use of cattle will be discussed at the end of this chapter.

The testimony of early Europeans in Nyasaland and the accounts by the Ngoni of their life in the pre-European period agree in giving the consumption of meat, milk, and blood a high place in the diet of the cattle-owning families. It was a widespread European criticism in the

1930's that the Ngoni did not live as well as they might and had, in fact, an impoverished diet, because they did not make full use, and sometimes very little use, of the milk and meat which they had available. In pre-European days, when the possession of cattle was confined to the Paramount, the chiefs and leading *alumuzana*, there was a continuous slaughter of animals to provide a regular diet of meat and *ulubende*, the cooked blood which the Ngoni liked very much. The heads of the big houses saw that there was always on hand *amasi*, the milk curds which was the form in which adults took their milk, fresh milk being reserved for young children and herd-boys. This provision of meat, *ulubende* and *amasi* was only possible for those who had plenty of cattle, and in both kingdoms wars and raids were carried out partly to obtain fresh supplies of cattle from neighbouring and unconquered tribes. As we saw in the chapter on the Paramount, in pre-European days the *alumuzana* who lived near enough to the royal village made a practice of calling frequently, if not daily, and such calls were rewarded by their being asked to eat with the Paramount, and 'food' in those days was predominantly meat. Between fighting seasons, that is during the rains, the young men (*amajaha*) who were newly recruited to the regiments were kept busy in and around the Paramount's village and the head villages of the *alumuzana*, mending fences, making shields, and clearing new land. When they were thus employed they also were fed by the Paramount or *muhumuzana*, who regarded these periodic feasts for the *amajaha* as one of the first calls on the consumption of his cattle. The Ngoni later rationalized this earlier procedure of restricting meat and milk consumption to certain groups of people by arguing that it made the young warriors strong and able to fight and endure hardships, and they declared that the senior men and women who also shared the Paramount's supplies lived long and had great wisdom and strength of character. This rationalization was not only looking back to a past Utopia. It was also based on the argument that Europeans ate meat regularly and that they were strong, both physically and politically.

The European criticism in the 1930's that the Ngoni did not make full dietary use of their cattle and their products was justified, but there are two factors to note in this connexion. One was that the number of those who lived well on meat and milk in the old days was relatively small—confined in fact to cattle-owners, women owners of big houses, and warriors. The situation changed after the Europeans came, and a large number of people owned a few cattle and many of the new owners had no tradition about using their products. Among the cattle-owners of the Swazi clans the tradition of cooking blood and making curds continued and both were valued as food, but some of those who had only recently become owners of cattle did not know these practices, and

I came across many cattle-owners of local tribes who did not know how to milk a cow. The failure to use milk in the Ngoni diet was due partly

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to the method of rearing calves by letting them take all the milk they wanted, and partly to the practice of letting the herd-boys have the rest. In villages under a *muhumzana* of a Swazi clan, who had a wife in his big house also of a Swazi clan, the consumption of milk was to some extent organized. These senior women saw that the herd-boys brought them a certain amount of milk each day, and they gave it to young children or invalids, and made some into *amasi*.

Another practice which restricted the use of meat and milk as regular items of diet was that the building up of the herds was regarded as a primary responsibility of the owners and guardians of cattle. Hence calves were given milk, which in western countries would be drawn off for human use, and the killing of beasts, unless they were sick, was restricted to selling the meat for cash or using it in ritual. One of the embarrassments suffered by an anthropologist was being presented with a beast by people who hardly ever killed one for their own use. It was true that a general share-out took place when the beast was killed, but it was none the less one beast fewer in the herd, and it was the maintenance and increase of the herds which was the cattle-owners' chief concern.

This emphasis on numbers rather than quality, which caused so much misunderstanding between government departments and cattle-owners, was closely related to the forms of exchange in cattle. Formerly cattle were handed over either as *lobola* or as penalties for the infringement of laws. Both these forms of transfer continued, but there were additional demands which cattle-owners or potential owners had to be aware of in watching the increase or diminution of their herds. One characteristic of these modern forms of exchange was the ready convertibility of cattle into cash and of cash into cattle. We have seen how young men away at work sent money back to their fathers or fathers' brothers to buy cattle. We have seen too how the possession of cattle made it possible to sell a beast and obtain cash for various purposes, and the proximity of markets where there were butchers' stalls encouraged this sale of cattle.

One of the most frequent reasons for the conversion of cattle into cash was for the purpose of hiring labour. We saw in Chapter I of this section how Lopati Nzungu killed cattle to feed the men who carried bricks and cement for his brother's tomb and sold another beast to pay wages to the bricklayers. The traditional way of paying labourers had been by feeding them with meat, and the modern method was to pay them cash wages and to find the money for it by the sale of cattle. Such labour could be for cultivating, house-building, fence-building, road-making and other local work. The possession of cattle which were easily convertible into cash made possible this payment of labour, and this relationship between the role of cattle-owner and the role of employer of labour was common.

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- 844 ready for burning, and generally cleaned up. The fire in the middle of the hut was rekindled to warm the mother and baby, and gruel was given to the mother of millet flour, brought from the mother-in-law's hut where it had been cooked. With the help of the other women, the mother
- [262] washed her breasts with warm water and massaged them to make the milk flow, ready for the child to suck.
- [853]
- 845 The other ethnic groups surrounding the Ngoni in Nyasaland considered it disastrous if a child was born face down or with the buttocks first, and twins were dreaded as ill omens. The Ngoni shared none of these beliefs and were particularly considerate for the mother of twins, often killing
- [262] a beast to give the mother meat and broth to increase her
- [853] flow of milk. The only notice the Ngoni took of the method of presentation at birth was that they gave a child a name indicative of such a birth. They gave special names for the first and second twin born. If one twin died it was buried under the veranda of the hut and a smooth stone was placed
- [553] on top. This stone was used for sitting on, and the surviving twin was held on it when being washed.
- [766]

Ritual and social uncleanness

- 846 From the time just before the birth took place the hut and everything in it, and the woman and her new baby, were
- 783 considered ritually unclean. If she had to leave the hut to answer the call of nature, she covered herself with a cloth from head to foot and avoided meeting anyone. She did no cooking herself until the ritual uncleanness was removed. Food was brought to her from her mother-in-law's hut or from her co-wives' huts, a special dish was used and washed separately, and she did not use her hands to eat with but a wooden spoon which was also washed separately. During the period of seclusion within the hut one of the senior women who helped at the birth slept in the hut with the mother and baby. No other young children were allowed to sleep in the hut, though they might come in to see the baby. All males

'A NEW STRANGER HAS COME'

societies maintaining officially a conspiracy of silence, the stories were only standard replies by adults to children, and most adults admitted that children pursued these inquiries among themselves and found out what they wanted to know from each other. 864

Naming the child

After coming out of the hut and being presented to its male kin and to the elders of the village as 'the new stranger', the baby was given a name. The choice of a name was usually left to the baby's paternal grandfather. He sometimes gave it his name or his father's name, if a boy, or if a girl, his mother's name or his father's sister's name. There was no ceremony attached to naming. After the matter had been talked over by the men at the kraal gate, the grandfather came to the hut, and called the mother and child out and said, 'His name is so and so.' The personal name was seldom used in ordinary social intercourse, but in spite of this every child was given a personal name, and sometimes had added to it a descriptive name indicating that it had been born face downwards, or born a twin, or born too soon after the previous baby. 553 [551] [845]

At this time of naming, the father, or more generally the paternal grandfather, prepared a 'carrying skin' for the mother to carry the baby in. It really belonged to the baby rather than to the mother, for it was used by the nurse girl to carry the baby, and she had the child in her charge most of the day. The skin was that of a goat or small calf from the herd owned by the house to which the baby's father belonged. The skin was cleaned and scraped and made soft by rubbing in fat, and handed over to the mother with some of the meat for broth, and the rest of the meat was eaten by the males of that house. The gift in time became a cloth and not a skin, as skins for wearing or household use went out of fashion. The cloth when presented however was still called a 'carrying skin' and a goat or a calf from the herd of the 854 [281] [422] [262] ●

IV

Family Life for the Young Child

The women's world

It was the proud boast of the Ngoni aristocrats that their women did no 'work' in the old days. When they spoke thus they were equating 'work' with physical labour, sweeping and cleaning in the hut and compound, fetching wood and water, hoeing in the gardens, and the routine part of preparing and cooking food. The Ngoni women of the former large households had an army of 'helpers' to do all these tasks for them. Though the number of helpers dwindled as the larger households disappeared, the pattern of appropriation of tasks remained in the shrunken households, and hence the Ngoni women were always responsible for a high degree of household management. Larger households in the old days fed fifty to sixty people from their cooking-pots, and though when I lived among them the scale of their households was much smaller, some were still feeding twenty and more people for each meal, apart from the occasional meals served when kinsfolk and strangers came unexpectedly. 562 461 592

I never failed to be impressed with the quiet dignified competence with which Ngoni women managed their household affairs. They did it with an apparent effortless, which had its roots in long training and tradition, and in an awareness of responsibility that increased, but weighed less heavily, with age and experience. This competence was always apparent on occasions such as wedding feasts. Then cereal food, meat, vegetable relishes were cooked in vast quantities and served out to the separate groups of guests. [262] ●

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- 561 related to a young child by kinship, there were three distinct
 855 age-groups. Nearest in age to him were his older sisters,
 602 children of his own mother, of his father's other wives, and
 of his father's brothers' wives. When he began to talk he
 [601] addressed all these as 'sister', or rather as 'my sister', and
 they took a kindly interest in him, especially if he were a boy
 and therefore to be removed from them when the time came
 for him to live in the boys' dormitory. They played with
 him, they sometimes carried him about while the nurse girl
 • [262] did something else, they ground bulrush millet or roasted
 ground-nuts to give him as snacks. They were particularly
 [868] concerned with teaching him to speak correctly, to say the
 right names for things, to use the correct terms for older
 [533] people, and later to sing the refrains of little songs in their
 singing games.

- Above this sister group in age came his own mother and
 his other 'mothers', who were his father's other wives and
 his father's brothers' wives. All of them he was taught to
 address as 'my mother'. His father's sisters on the other
 [601] hand, who took a special interest in his upbringing, he ad-
 dressed as 'woman father', and the name implied some
 [554] measure of the authority which his father and his father's
 brothers exercised in the household and in the village.

- Above this generation of mothers and woman-fathers
 came the grandmothers. Pre-eminent in supervising his life
 and the care taken of him was his father's own mother, but
 [601] he also addressed as 'grandmother' his grandfather's other
 wives and his grandfather's brothers' wives.

- The same triple grouping by age and generation, which
 561 the child learned by degrees to distinguish among his own
 357 kin, was repeated among the 'helpers' in his mother's and
 grandmother's households. There were young children who
 were the children of the household staff. His nurse girl and
 her fellow nurse girls formed a slightly senior group in this
 division, both by reason of their responsibilities as well as of
 their age. Above them, as the next generation, were the

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858 signs of irritation at female control, especially with this pro-
 867 hibition on going to the kraal gate. They escaped surveillance
 and ran off there now and then, only to be caught by one of
 the men, beaten and brought back to the compound with the
 remark: 'This child is not yet a herd boy. Keep him with you.'

If the village was near a roadway with traffic on it, or near
 a river, children were forbidden to go there without some
 older person with them. They were also warned not to go
 near fireplaces in case a burning log fell out, and to keep
 away from the woodpile where there might be snakes.

Training in habits

855 In these surroundings, diversified, orderly, and on the whole
 safe if forbidden places were avoided, young children's needs
 were attended to and they were gradually trained to look
 after themselves. For food, health and sleep, their primary
 physical needs, they had their older sisters, nurse girls,
 mothers, grandmothers and helpers all at hand to ensure that
 these needs were satisfied.

264 After the post-weaning months were over, and generally
 862 though not always after the next baby was born, a young
 child went back to eat with his mother in her compound and
 sleep in her hut, though a grandmother, if she had taken a
 special fancy to a child, might say she was going to keep him
 to eat and sleep with her. In his mother's compound twice
 a day the child watched her and her helpers preparing and
 cooking a meal. In due time he was called to the veranda
 where the food lay smoking, his hands were wiped, he was
 made to rinse out his mouth, and he sat down beside his
 mother or his nurse in a circle round the food basket. This
 contained the mash of cooked grain, usually maize, and be-
 side it were the little pots of cooked 'relish', beans, peas,
 [262] green vegetables, tomatoes, ground-nuts. At first someone
 pinched up a little lump of the mash, dipped it in a relish,
 and popped it into his mouth, telling him to shut his mouth
 and chew before he swallowed. Later he learned to do this

FAMILY LIFE FOR THE YOUNG CHILD

himself, with his eyes rather anxiously on the elders, lest he should take too large a lump, or get the relish all over his hand and wrist instead of only on his finger-tips. He learned, however hungry he was, not to stuff himself, and not to eat noisily. If he smacked his lips and gulped audibly, someone in the circle might say: 'I hear the guns of the Tyandla people booming.' They all stopped eating and looked at him, and he learned that a proverb could be a veiled rebuke, and he hung his head, ashamed. [539]

Sometimes the smaller children had cow's milk or curds and whey or thin gruel given to them in a tiny gourd between the main meal-times, and through the day nurse girls and older sisters gave them little snacks if they thought of it or if the child whimpered because it was hungry. A favourite snack was ground bulrush millet, creamy and nutty to taste. Throughout this period spent in the women's world the child did not lack food either at or between meals. As he grew more mobile and independent, he went foraging in the compounds of his other mothers and his grandmothers, especially if his own mother had gone to her garden. They always welcomed him and gave him something to go on with. 862 264 855 [262]

After set meals the child was made to rinse his mouth, and his hands were cleaned by his nurse girl and his face and chest washed if he had covered himself with food fragments. His nurse girl found him a 'tooth-brush twig' and frayed it for him, and taught him to use it after meals as well as in the early morning. 863

Washing of small children was always done in the compound. While some children squirmed and yelled when washed, others liked it. They sat grinning on the veranda while their mother or nurse splashed water over them, rubbed soapy leaves on their hair, dried them with a cloth, and rubbed cow's fat on their skin. The Ngoni children in well-ordered households shone with cleanliness till they were about six years old. Then the boys dodged these female attentions, their skin became dry and scruffy, and their hair full

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575 there. It was a rough Spartan existence, where individual feelings and preferences had little scope, and where the younger ones were kept busy from dawn to dusk. Ngoni elders believed and indeed it was a key concept in their culture, that boys should be kept busy all the time and made to wash in cold water. Bathing in the cold streams of the Ngoni highlands was part of dormitory life. No Edwardian father talked more piously and convincingly about the merits of cold baths than Ngoni parents did.

575 The boys living in the dormitory continued to be fed from their mother's household. The older boys had their food brought by a child to the kraal gate as was done for their fathers. The younger ones sometimes fetched their own and took it to the kraal gate where they sat on the extreme edge of the men's group. More often they were given what was left over from their fathers' and older brothers' servings.

[146] This procedure accounted for the inadequate amounts eaten by the younger boys, though they drank some milk when milking the herds and out at the grazing grounds they made curds and caught birds and baked them in clay. Sometimes the desperation of hunger drove them to steal maize cobs or ground nuts from their mother's granary to roast in the ashes of their fire. This kind of stealing was condemned as very wrong by Ngoni standards, and sometimes older boys, in order to show their authority, forced the young ones to steal in this way on their behalf.

575 What effect did dormitory life produce on the boys? The Ngoni parents, the fathers that is, expected it to produce toughness, leadership, responsibility and respect for authority. On the whole it was successful. The Spartan life ensured toughness, the herding of cattle demanded responsibility and leadership, and the smooth running of dormitory society was based on respect for authority and obedience to it. From time to time the younger boys ganged up together to protect themselves from over-exploitation, and learned in these efforts at resistance the value of joint action. There was con-

VILLAGE LIFE FOR OLDER BROTHERS AND SISTERS

521 men's affairs. The kind of topics discussed by men at the kraal
 867 gate included hunting, in the right season; cases heard in the
 courts and the application of Ngoni law to all subjects of the
 Ngoni chiefs; the organization of village affairs from tax col-
 lecting and dealing with tax evaders to beer drinks and
 burials and building houses; the sales of cotton, tobacco and
 cattle at near-by markets and the current prices; the various
 labour recruiters combing the villages for likely young men
 and the latest stories brought back by men who had returned
 from working in the south. Every now and then, particularly
 when the talk ranged round decisions in the courts or adding
 to the herds of cattle, references were made to the Ngoni past,
 to their relations with Europeans, both missionaries and
 officials, and to the behaviour of the non-Ngoni groups in the
 Ngoni kingdoms. The older boys listened attentively and as
 we shall see later in Chapter VII acquired among other
 things an extensive knowledge about the needs and uses of
 cattle. The younger ones pricked up their ears now and then
 when a familiar name or event was mentioned, and stored
 up questions to ask their father at a time when he was willing
 to listen and answer.

576 There was the usual Ngoni formality about where people
 417 sat at the kraal gate. The most senior men sat on each side
 of the opening, leaning up against the gate-posts, with the
 rest in decreasing order of rank as they were farther from the
 gate. The cleared space on each side of the gate and in front
 of it was all known as the 'gate of the kraal'. The craftsmen

[463] who were carving wood or twisting bark rope, making bas-
 kets or plaiting mats, sat according to their age and rank on
 the edges of the senior group or among them. They could
 have carried on their trade anywhere, but they preferred the
 company of their fellows and did not want to miss listening
 to the talk or the arrival of strangers. The herd-boys, when

858 they were present, were on the extreme edges of those sitting

[561] there, divided into two groups, 'youths' and boys. Each

● [262] group made its own fire for boiling milk and roasting sweet
 potatoes or ground-nuts. 96

THE THRESHOLD OF ADULTHOOD (I)

When the boy's voice began to break, and his father or another older man noticed it, the second part of the ritual took place. The father's brother went to a senior man famed in the village as a herbalist and obtained from him several kinds of roots. These were ground and then cooked either in milk or in the cud from a goat's stomach, usually the latter, for the father liked it to be known that he killed a goat for his son. If the mixture was cooked in milk, a fowl was killed, and in either case the boy was given the meat to eat immediately after the mixture to take away the extremely bitter taste. The cooking took place on a small fire by the kraal gate in the presence of the male members of the father's house. The boy was told to dip the tips of his fingers in the mixture as it was bubbling in the pan and to lick them quickly. He was not expected to show that he found the mixture very bitter as well as hot to touch. At intervals the boy had to jump over the fire, hitting his elbows and knees with the palms of his hands. The more often he did this, the less often did he have to dip in the pan because the mixture soon dried up, but he had to continue dipping and licking till there was no liquid left. The senior men watched intently all through this performance because they believed the mixture not only helped physical growth and muscular strength but would prevent impotence. When this ritual was performed for the heir of a chief, it was followed by a war-dance in the cattle kraal and the boy had to take a second dose of medicine in the kraal surrounded by the warriors. In such a case a bull was killed instead of the customary goat, and the contents of its stomach used for mixing the medicine. The meat was eaten by the boy and his father's relatives.

As in the case of the girls, this boy's ritual was an occasion for asserting the authority of the father and his kin over the boy. For him there was however no separating off into another group after this maturing. He continued to live in the dormitory, herd cattle, and go to school as before.

CHILDREN OF THEIR FATHERS

224 After the hunt the tally of kills was reckoned up, the game was carried home by the young men, and on the return to the villages the meat was cooked and eaten by the men at the kraal gate. This was the occasion for going over all the episodes of the chase, the skill of So-and-so, the fine organizing of the hunt by its 'owner'. No one mentioned the misses, no one's feelings were hurt, and there was a warm feeling of united and contented sharing in a good day's sport.

• [262]

[521]

Lion-hunting was organized differently. Only former warriors and well-known huntsmen were called, and they sometimes took their sons with them as carriers. Guns as well as spears were taken, though the Ngoni liked to say, and it was often true, that they killed lions with spears only. Tracking a lion was dangerous and difficult, and when it was located in a patch of tall grass or reeds, the huntsmen made a circle round it, ready to attack when it broke cover. As in the chase, the one who stabbed the lion first, second and finally was noted. The dead lion was hoisted on poles slung from the shoulders of young men, and carried to the village where the hunt was organized. Here the party was welcomed and given food, the heroes were acclaimed, and the headman and seniors led the way to the village of the clan head, who called his men together to rejoice. When the augmented party reached the chief's or Paramount's village, [535] where all lions had to be taken, a war-dance took place in [555] the kraal, as of warriors returning from a campaign. The killer of the lion came out in front of the rest and danced his individual war-dance; he was hailed as a hero and new epithets were added to his praise names. The whole party [273] was given beer, a beast was killed for a meat feast, and then [574] the party thanked the Paramount in traditional fashion and went home.

It was in lion-hunting that young adults who were taken along felt the spice of danger, the thrill of success, and witnessed the pride of recognition for the successful killer by the Paramount and all 136 the Ngoni leaders.

THE THRESHOLD OF ADULTHOOD (II)

Maize, the Ngoni staple cereal which had replaced the tall millet they had formerly preferred, was stored on the cob in the grain stores which were described in Chapter IV. Women whose husbands could afford to hire labour to work in their fields often had three or four large grain stores, and their presence in the compound conferred importance on their owners. Inside the hut were earthenware jars of beans, cowpeas, bulrush millet, clarified fat and butter, dried chillies, while from the rafters hung bunches of herbs and dried green spinach. Some of the jars were polished a shining black, others had a blue or green glaze on them. It was a Ngoni girl's ambition to go to her new home when married with a good array of storage pots, baskets, mats, spoons, stirring sticks, and a wooden meat-dish. This would show her in-laws that she was industrious and intended to have a high standard of household management in her new home.

Varieties of food and their preparation

Ngoni women prided themselves on feeding their households well, both in variety, quantity and quality. Although they could rely on helpers to work in the gardens and to do some of the preparing of food before cooking, they always managed their own supplies and provided a variety of menus, and showed that they could cook well themselves and instruct others.

Ngoni girls clustered round the fire when a special dish was being prepared. They watched every movement of their mother as she lifted one pot off the fire and put another on, measured out water in a spoon to add to the sauce, stirred the maize porridge strongly and evenly to get rid of lumps and bubbles, washed each stirring stick in a pot of water before using it again.

There was variety in the dishes served from day to day in big Ngoni households, usually in the form of a main dish of cereal with side dishes of broth and vegetables and less often of meat or chicken. The main dish was served in the

CHILDREN OF THEIR FATHERS

- 262 round covered food basket, the side dishes in small covered
[415] earthenware bowls. Among the traditional Ngoni dishes
learned by girls were the following:

- 252 Gruel made of cow's milk and maize flour (for young
children).
262 Whole maize boiled with beans and round peas.
Sweet potatoes boiled, peeled and mashed with tomatoes.
Beans and finger millet flour cooked separately and then
stirred together.
Pumpkins cooked with ground-nut paste.
Ground-nut flour cooked with scraps of meat.
Whole tall millet pounded with ground-nuts.
Pot-roast chicken with tomatoes, onions and ground-nuts.

- 262 In Ngoni households meat when cooked in large quantities,
not just as broth made from bones and titbits, was served on
415 a special wooden meat-dish, round or oblong with rounded
ends, and supported on three sturdy legs. This meat-dish
was an integral part of the equipment of every 'true Ngoni'
[264] household, and, like the French housewife's omelet pan, was
after use wiped clean and polished with clarified fat. The
outside of these meat-dishes was often decorated with 'poker
[531] work' designs by the maker, and such decorated and shining
meat-dishes were treasured as heirlooms. Other, but rare,
415 heirlooms were hammered brass pots with a flat bottom and
turned over edge, of the pattern known in India as *dekchies*.
The Ngoni women who owned them declared they had been
brought by their ancestors from the south.

- 251 All the extra fat when a beast was killed was sent to the
women of the 'house' in whose herd it was, and this fat was
cooked until it was clarified, and then stored. Butter was
made by shaking milk in a gourd, and it was also clarified
[234] for keeping. Formerly milk curds were made daily by the
senior women and kept to mature in a jar before being
eaten. Only in a few Ngoni households was this still done.

- 273 Beer was made on special occasions when the women had

an adequate garden for his wife. He may clear a fresh garden on rejuvenated land, or enlarge his own or his wife's garden, depending on how they are placed. It is usually not until much later in the marriage that a man starts a garden of his own, distinct from the one nominally owned by his wife. The work of clearing a new place for a garden is not, among the Ngoni, necessarily a man's job, and can be undertaken by a woman alone if she has no man to assist her. If the husband is present, he does most of the tree felling, and his wife breaks up the new ground with her hoe. 591 241 343 241 462

The planting, weeding, and cultivating are all done by both men and women, and during the wet season a man goes to the garden with his wife early in the morning and they both work there until they are tired. Later, when the growing crop has to be protected against monkeys by day and wild pigs by night, they both spend long hours on watch in the garden shelter. At harvest, both cut down the maize and lift the ground crops, but only the woman can carry the produce to the village. If the man helps, it is by bringing a cart or sledge and taking home a large load pulled by oxen. 492

In the other subsistence pursuits of animal husbandry and hunting, there is no co-operation between husband and wife until the animals have been killed, when the woman has to cook the meat. Hunting is entirely a male occupation, and animal husbandry largely so. If a man goes away on a journey, he leaves his cattle in charge of his son or brother or father rather than with his wife. If there is no trustworthy man available, then they become his wife's responsibility, but all she in fact does is to see that the senior herdboys report to her every evening about the state of the beasts. Small stock such as goats and sheep and pigs may be looked after entirely by the wife, and chickens are likely to be in her care. 224 233 462

A man looks to his wife to feed him, and it is considered a reflection on her industry if he does not get enough and has to hang about when his companions are eating in the hope that they will invite him to join them. She feeds him within the exigencies of the food-supply, which often involves semi-starvation in February and March. She is expected to cook competently, and if a woman continually burns the porridge which forms the basis of every meal, there will be strife between her and her husband. If she proves to be a really bad cook her husband may send her home again to be taught properly. 593 262 252

Beer-brewing is the work of women, and is a process lasting at least six days even after all the correct ingredients have been mustered. There is some variation with status in the extent to which husbands require their wives to brew beer, and it is in any case a matter in which the woman can take the initiative. Important men and chiefs who have many visitors like to be able to offer beer to their guests, so that queens spend much time brewing. But common men need to conserve their food supplies more carefully, and know that their visitors will be disappointed but not surprised if there is no beer. A woman sometimes brews to sell the beer and gain money to buy herself clothes, if her husband has no money to give her. 273 462 554 514 437

591 after a year or so. If he keeps it going himself he visits his own
 241 village for a week or two at a time to tend the garden, and stores the
 473 produce with a relative in the village. If, however, a man intends to
 reside for many years in his wife's village, he gives away his garden
 and concentrates his labours in his wife's garden. After a year
 [343] or two he builds her a storehouse in her village and the couple begin
 to keep their own supplies separate from those of her relatives.

Even when the couple have their own storehouse it is considered
 431 proper if from time to time they are given maize by their parents.

• 262 If a woman living virilocally goes to visit her parents and relatives
 and returns without maize or flour her husband's relatives are likely
 to laugh at her and say 'She must come from a very poor family'.

591 Uxorilocal residence is described by the vernacular term *cikomwene*.
 606 In its most general usage this word refers to the obligations a man
 owes to his wife's parents, particularly at the beginning of his
 marriage. It has three specific meanings:

- (i) Uxorilocal residence.
- (ii) Assistance rendered from time to time by a man in his
 wife's mother's garden.
- (iii) A hoeing party of men and women from the man's village
 which works in his wife's mother's garden.

Uxorilocal residence is classed with these other two aspects of
 affinal obligation and like them it can be avoided completely, shirked,
 or executed in full. The extent to which the obligations are fulfilled

Table XIV. Virilocality and Uxorilocality, 1948-9

Wife's residence	Husband's residence		Total
	Rural	Away	
Virilocal ..	72	14	86
Uxorilocal ..	24	20	44
Total	96	34	130
Ratio of virilocal to uxorilocal wives	3	0.7	1.95

Association between husband's residence and wife's residence

$\chi^2 = 12.83$ $P < .001$

Informants as in Table XIII

585 bride herself refuses to sit on the mat until she has been given a present. She is joined on the mat by a small girl, aged about ten, from the groom's family, who becomes known as 'the guide'.¹ The leader of the bride's party and one other of the bride's women sit down on the mat, with the bride and the guide between them.

[237] The instruction of the bride now begins, with a speech from some important man in the village, who takes the gall bladder and anoints the head, arms and feet of the bride with the gall, going on to anoint the guide in the same way. They are then sometimes anointed with vaseline by a woman. One person after another, men and women,

[86] now proceed to lecture the bride on how she should behave in the village, and each explains to her who he or she is in relation to her. The gall bladder is blown up and stuck in the hair of the bride, where she will keep it until she returns to her own village. Each person who delivers a speech of instruction gives a small present, a threepenny bit or beads, which they put into a plate on the mat at the bride's feet. This situation of formal instruction, often of an abusive nature, accompanied by presents, is a recurrent one in Ngoni ceremonial.²

[237] Sometimes the small intestine of the animal is placed round the shoulders of a younger sister of the bride who is a member of her party. This girl is then designated linked co-wife (*nshanzi*) of the bride. This is not always done, and when it is done it does not imply that the girl will later become the real linked co-wife of her elder sister. Although in the two ceremonies I saw this designation of a linked co-wife did not occur, in both a sister of the bride was one of the bridal party.

• [262] At the end of the instruction, the bride and her party go back into their own hut, and the leader cooks the liver of the animal, and the blood and fat. This she divides between the two families, sending the portion of the bridegroom's family to their hut for them to eat there. The guide stays in the bride's hut. After they have rested, the bride, guide, and their companions leave the village, taking the meat with them back to the bride's village. Outside her village the party stop, and are met by more women from the bride's family. The guide demands a small present before she will enter the village, usually beads. Inside the village the bride's mother takes the gall bladder from her daughter's head and buries it in the byre. The guide stays in the village for a few days, and demands another small present before she will assist the bride's people with cooking. When a quantity of flour has been pounded for the bride, and some maize half-pounded for the guide, the bride and the guide return quietly to the bridegroom's village. The bride begins to live with her husband, and the guide resumes her normal

¹ *Mpelehesi*, from the verb *ku-pelehesa*, to accompany part of the way. Cf. Zulu *impelesi*, girl accompanying a bride to her wedding.

² See above, p. 77.

592 mother. One of the man's sisters conducts the wife to her mother-
252 in-law's hut, and under the instruction of the assembled women
593 she begins to cook. Although people speak of her doing the cooking,
[262] in practice all she does is to look on while her sisters-in-law do
the work. The porridge is divided onto plates and distributed under
the directions of the man's mother. One plate is sent to the man's
father, one to the husband who eats the porridge with his brothers,
and one to the most important woman in the village, while some are
taken by the cooks themselves. The man's father is expected to
remark on how well the porridge has been cooked, but he may say
that it has been poorly prepared and his daughter-in-law must be
taught again. This expression of disapproval cannot be more than
a way of showing his dislike for his daughter-in-law for whatever
he says the ceremony is not repeated and the woman begins to cook
regularly for her husband. If the man's relatives are wealthy, they
may kill a goat or a sheep on this occasion, or the woman's parents
may send a sheep or a goat to be killed and eaten. The woman's
parents cannot themselves attend the ceremony.

[91] If the couple begin their marriage uxorilocally this ceremony
does not take place. The bride begins to cook for her husband as
soon as he comes to live with her, using her grand-mother's hut as a
kitchen.

Appendix III

THE HOEING PARTY

606 A man is under an obligation to provide once during his marriage
583 a party of hoers who work in his wife's mother's garden for the
greater part of one day and who are rewarded by his wife's father.
This party is called by the general word for obligations owed by a
man towards his parents-in-law, *cikomwene*.¹ The function of this
occasion, as a socially sanctioned method of expression of hostility
between a man and his affines, has already been discussed. I
attended one of these parties and my clerk attended two others.

The man, or a relative of his, tells his father that he is planning
to bring a party to hoe on such and such a day. If the father-in-law
agrees that the day is suitable he tells his wife to brew beer for the
hoers. On the agreed day the hoeing party arrive early in the
morning and begin to work in the garden. The father-in-law promises
presents to the leader of the hoers, who continue to hoe until they
are offered what they consider is sufficient. They then stop, and
go to the village to receive the present and drink beer.

¹ See above, p. 74.

- [643] take the "child," going with him to a hut to give him instruction, saying, "To-day you stand alone. Look after your people as did your father before you. [183] If a man be at fault, forgive him; but the sin of adultery cannot be pardoned."

IV

THE UNAMWALI CEREMONY

- [881] I. WHEN a young girl finds she has become a woman, she goes and stands beside the pathway [leading to the village]. Any one passing finds her there, standing silent. If it be a man who notices her, he goes off and tells some woman, saying to her, "I have come across game, go and lift it." An old woman goes off to speak to her. She finds the girl, her face enveloped in her calico, and giving no answer to any question put to her. Then the old woman knows the girl is now a matured woman, and takes her off to the stream to bathe her. On returning with her from the water she places her in the hut of the head old woman of the village. (The old woman who first found her is the head of the ensuing ceremony.) Then the old woman goes off to inform other elderly women that "the maiden has reached womanhood." The girl remains in the hut six days. Should she be of the clan of Kuoni, they give her porridge made from millet only, if of any other clan, porridge made of any grain. In her relish they do not put salt. Her porridge she eats out of an old basket, and the relish from a potsherd. (This old basket will be

A VILLAGE EXODUS

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and take the liver, and lungs, and stomach, and set them down beside the beer, and cut off some meat from a fore-leg, and roast it, and cut off a piece, and give the head of the Kuka hut, and cut another piece, and the chief eats it, and another his old men eat, and then they begin to cut off bits for their children. The rest of the meat is put in a basket, and next morning is cut up.

They They kill the god
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[162]●

III. When the propitiation of the spirits is finished the chief tells his headman, "To-day you must cook some relish, and give it to all the people, and finish the ceremony in connection with the exodus." So he (the headman) sleeps with his wife, and in the morning she takes the relish to give to the chief. All persons of lesser importance come and take theirs from the hut, and any one who is at a distance at the time has his put aside. Now the ceremony is over, and the villagers again resume cohabitation with their wives [broken off since the beginning of the ceremony]. One month passes, and then a great quantity of beer is cooked all over the village, and they have a dance that at the new village the ground may become trampled and hard. When some farther time has elapsed, they cook beer, to demolish the huts of the dead, that were left standing at the old village. At the new village, when a man dies, the first one to do so is buried at the old village; when one of the village elders dies, he is buried at the new settlement, and thereafter all who die are buried there.

[834]
[166]

THE WITCH-FINDER

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turns it out. They also trap them with a falling stone trap, and a spring trap, and others they dig for and smoke out. Mice dig out a hole, and a little farther on make a little chamber, where their nest is; farther on still is their escape exit, with just a thin layer of earth between them and the surface, so that when any one starts digging they can just burst out there. Other mice make a nest in the grass. The *Siswiri* mouse people do not eat; it cannot jump a path; if it tries to, it dies. 224
[25]
[262] ●

XII

THE WITCH-FINDER

I. WHEN a person has died, the chief mourner goes off to seek the witch-finder. When he finds him he says, "At my home something awful has happened, and I am saying that perhaps you can follow up the thing that has killed the person." The witch-finder comes very late in the evening. When he comes, the chief mourner gives him children to lead him to the grave. When they come to the grave there, he asks them, saying, "Which way did they come with the body?" And they say they came there. And he puts medicine where they came, and asks again, saying, "Well, and his head, which direction did they lay it?" And they tell him, "His head was in this direction." He again with medicine guards the place. Then the witch-finder makes fire, and kindles it into flame, and pours medicine on it; and he does so lest people see the fire. And then they see the human flesh-eaters. 791
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THE STORY OF KACHIRAMBE

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So the attendants came to where the second head was, and cut its throat, and as they return he is decaying; when he would cough he cannot finish, and just goes, "wopoi 'opoi 'poi" with a weak voice, and decays, and decays, and dies. 539

XVIII

THE STORY OF KACHIRAMBE

I. SOME young girls once said, "Come, let us go and pluck leaves for a reliah with our porridge." And when they were gathering them, one of the children saw the egg of a hyæna, and picked it up, and put it in her basket, and said to her companions, "You children, I have got all I want, I am going." And her companions said, "Whenever did you pull them, when you are off so soon?" And she replied, "As for me, I filled my basket some time ago." So her companions bade her go. When she has gone, they saw a hyæna; he has come up to them and asks, saying, "You children, who has taken my egg from there?" And they deny having done so, saying, "We do not know, but she who has gone off perhaps she has taken it." And the hyæna went off. He comes to where she lives, and says, "Who has taken my egg?" And the mother of the girl replies, "But the child, she has come in with an egg, it is on the fire," and the hyæna said, "Well, what am I to do?" And the woman replied, "Wait, when I have a child you shall eat him." And the hyæna said, "Yes, [that is a good arrangement]."

On the second day, also, the *maravi* native takes cows or a goat according to his means, and divides the flesh among the mourners. The bones may not be gnawed, as this would be considered equivalent to eating the dead man, but they are put into an agave basket and thrown away into the bush at the end of the feast.

On the third and fourth days the male relations surround the grave with a fence of *tachwa* grass known as *chilisa*, which is sometimes plastered by the women with mud. The Acheva are now beginning to imitate this custom, and also that of wearing *sinkhondo*. Both tribes plant *nkhandzi* trees about the graves in order that the dead may have shade.

A chief is not buried in the common graveyard, but in the village just outside his hut, and a chair is sometimes placed inside the *chilisa*. One of his senior relations kills a goat, and the new prospective chief ties a root along the handle and blade of a knife, with which he cuts a horizontal strip of skin round the quarters of a goat, and wears the strip for two or three months as a belt, the tail hanging down behind. With the same knife the widows cut off the false hoods together with a small piece of adjacent skin, through which they thread a string, and then bind a false hood on each wrist and wear them till the end of the period of mourning. The root must remain fastened to the knife throughout this period, at the end of which all are burnt together.

VIII.—MENTAL CHARACTERS.

1. Reincarnation and Spirits (*Chewa*).

Mizimu or spirits are invoked as intermediaries between man and God (*Chakwa*), and each village contains a hut for the spirits of past chiefs, to whom prayers are generally made because they are powerful and because they are known to everybody. Some of the larger villages have two huts, one for the spirits of men and the other for the spirits of women. A man may also make offerings to the spirits of his own family in his own hut. When the green maize is ready for eating, the people may not taste it until their headman has taken a cob, cooked it in his house and placed it in the spirits' house, where he claps his hands and thanks the spirits for the crop. The cob, like other offerings to spirits, may be eaten next morning by children below the age of initiation.

If, as frequently happens, a traveller strays—as we should say, absentmindedly—when following a route which he knows quite well, it is the work of a spirit which has been annoyed by him. On one such occasion a police constable of mine, who had been sent to the neighbouring station while his child was ill, found himself wandering several times from the main road, and knew thereby that his child was dead, and that its spirit was troubling him because he should

¹ *Nkhondzi*, euphorbia. These are evergreen, quickly propagated and long lived, and so they serve also as a sign to mark the grave long afterwards. In the Mwanja District the Anyanja and other tribes sometimes plant them in maize fields because they are supposed to be obnoxious to termites.

Livingstone, *loc. cit.*, p. 105, writes that in the Shire Highlands in 1829 they found all Mang'anja villages surrounded by an impenetrable hedge of poisonous euphorbia. He continues: "This tree casts a deep shade, which would render it difficult to bowmen to take aim at the villagers inside. The grass does not grow beneath it, and this may be the reason why it is so universally used, for when dry the grass would convey fire to huts inside; moreover, the hedge acts as a feeder to all flying sparks."

273 recipient usually takes the lead in praising, and his praise is chorused by the rest of the people in the hut.

The first jar, then, is divided by the owner himself and the bowlfuls are given to his village neighbours. The next jar is given to the headman or lieutenant of the village for division, and it is with the drinking of this jar that the party is held really to begin. The first bowl of this second jar is given by the divider of the beer back to the owner of the beer, who praises the divider before drinking. The second bowl goes to some other lieutenant or, if there is no other village lieutenant, to some important woman. Successive bowls go to other important people in the village. Subsequent jars are usually given to important visitors from other villages, who will allocate the bowls to their companions and to people in the host village. The first bowl of each jar goes to the divider of the jar, and the dregs, which are usually taken as the two last bowlfuls in each jar, and which are poured out after the jar has been tilted on its side, go to the dispenser of the beer, and to anyone who has been helping him.

There is a great deal of freedom in the allocation of beer in this way, and the complaints of people who hoped to be given beer and who were unfortunate are an invariable aftermath of any beer-party. It is important to note that the quantity of beer consumed by any individual is to some extent independent of the allocation of the jars and bowls. There are usually two or three bowls in use, and these are all filled up at each round. This means that most people in the hut drink each time. But what is remembered is not the beer drunk, but the method of allocation. Even if a man becomes intoxicated, he may yet complain the next day to his friends that the owner of the beer was miserly and lacking in generosity if no jar or bowl was specifically allocated to him. There is an obligation to return gifts of beer made in this way, so that a man can ensure a favourable reception for himself in other villages where there is beer, by his generosity and sagacity in distributing when there is beer in his own house.

262 The importance attached to beer-drinking is well brought out in
273 some essays written by schoolboys on the topic 'What I want to do when I leave school'. One of the boys wrote: 'Beer and cattle are the food of the Ngoni. . . . If your friend comes and he doesn't get beer and meat, then although he gets porridge, he still says that there was hunger in the house.' Another said: 'I will brew beer very often. Our life depends on drinking beer.' The small importance attached to beer

[929] by the neighbouring Cewa tribe is well known to the Ngoni, and one

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sophisticated informant remarked: 'The Cewa are just slaves, they merely eat. The Ngoni are like the Whites; they eat little and drink much.' 273
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Economic Co-operation

There are other activities which entail inter-village ties. Cattle seek their own fodder, but small stock, pigs, goats, and sheep, are fed on husks and other scraps. A man whose animals have increased beyond his ability to feed them will farm out some of them to his friends, either in his own village or in some neighbouring one. The tender of the animals then exercises some control over the disposal of any natural increase and at the end of the arrangement he is entitled to be given one of the animals. The friends whom a man selects for this task are not always close relatives, and may sometimes be people to whom he can trace no genealogical relationship at all, but whom he may have met, for instance, in Southern Rhodesia. Other people acquire a reputation for integrity, and may be given animals to look after by their acquaintances. Cattle are not disposed of so widely, and there is more often a kinship connexion between the owner and the tender. On the other hand, cattle are more susceptible than small stock to tsetse fly, and in consequence there are many people in the new areas that have been recently resettled who have to keep their cattle in the village of a relative or friend who lives in an area free from fly. 233
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Harvesting of crops is carried out by members of the household except in the case of the aged, who will call on their relatives to help them. Hut-building, making a new section of a garden, clearing the ground prior to planting, and, in particular, weeding the garden during the wet season, are activities that are often carried out by collective effort. Women, particularly pairs of widows, may work together in each other's gardens turn and turn about, and a man may be able to call on relatives, particularly his sons-in-law, to help in his garden without paying them for it. Most of the outside assistance that may be required in a garden is raised by means of a beer-party. The man's wife brews beer, and it is made known in the village and round about that on such-and-such a day there will be a party to hoe in their garden. A dozen or so people go to the garden in the morning, and work until the task set by the owner of the garden is completed. They then move to the village, and are refreshed with beer. Attendance at the beer-party is not restricted to those who have worked in the garden, and at some such parties a jar of beer may be specifically allocated to 241
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/12 cont'd/

252 The maize is shelled as required, the grains are pounded in a mortar, and then soaked in water for three or four days, if there is time. They are then pounded again, and the flour winnowed out.

[231] The residue is ground between two stones. The husks obtained after the first pounding are used as animal fodder, and in beer making.

[243] The diligent housewife pounds twice a week, each pounding lasting for about three hours. It is usual for a group of women living as [461] neighbours to pound at the same time, singing together.

The maize flour is dried in the sun, and then put into a pot or [251] basket until required for porridge or beer. Porridge forms the basis of most meals, although in February and March there may not be enough maize left in the storehouses to make this possible. Adults

262 eat porridge in solid form, kneading handfuls of it between their fingers before eating, but infants are fed on fluid porridge made from [264] the ground flour. The herdboys in charge of the cattle may use the [253] milk to make their porridge with. Cooking is women's work, but [462] men by themselves on a journey or working on the tobacco farms will cook porridge for themselves. Green mealies, usually fried, are eaten when available.

263 Relish is required to go with the porridge, the commonest relishes being pumpkin leaves and hibiscus leaves. There are in addition 222 many wild fruits and leaves searched for in the bush at their appropriate seasons, while the gardens provide pumpkins, cucumbers, 241 various kinds of beans and peas, and edible gourds. The most sought-after relish, and one of the most infrequently found, is meat. Chick-

262 ens are given to honoured visitors, while beef, mutton, pork, and goat meat are eaten when they can be found. Livestock other than chickens are killed for eating only on ceremonial occasions, such as [231] funerals or marriages, but owners not infrequently kill animals and sell the meat to raise money to pay damages, to finance a journey, or to obtain labour in the garden. Animals that die are usually eaten. Some people keep ducks, pigeons and tame guinea fowl, while such 235 game as is killed on the /13/ hunt is divided among the hunters and taken home to be eaten. Owners of guns sometimes hunt by them- 224 selves and sell the meat.

The art of cultivating the ground is only now being learned by the Ngoni. Formerly this was the work of the slaves. The masters know how to kill not to till. The soil is fairly rich though not nearly so fertile as what is found at the lake shore and in the deep valleys between. Maize is the great crop. But owing to the devastation of locusts for several years in succession, the Ngoni have learned to plant also reserve gardens of ka'ava, for the locusts and drought can scarcely affect this crop. A great variety of vegetables is cultivated, peas, beans, tomatoes, pumpkins, and so on. I have counted a variety of twenty-two different vegetables in the gardens beside one village. [241] [178] [567] [34] [31]

These vegetables are used as relish, but the staple food is always maize porridge, and a tasty dish it is. The maize is well cleaned, ground into a fine flour, and when cooked by a clever woman makes a most tempting dish of white porridge. The relish may consist of a piece of stewed fowl or goat, or well boiled vegetable. The greatest dainty that was ever offered to me was a dish of lovely maize porridge with relish of stewed caterpillars. I did without the relish on that occasion. An interesting thing about these caterpillars is that they live on the top of trees, and the natives, to get at them, will hew down the tree. You can see how delicate a dish it makes if every caterpillar in the dish has been got at the cost of a tree. They take the place of the old European dish of peacocks cooked in their feathers. [262] [252] [222]

No native thinks he has eaten until he has had his porridge. A missionary whom I know once unwisely gave a feast to his elders, feeding them on European food. They ate till they could eat no more, then stretching themselves, and after politely expressing their satisfaction by audible sounds of satiety, they rose and said, "We must now go home to our porridge." [261] [264]

The maize and vegetables are grown with very little trouble, but there is also a species of millet which is largely cultivated, and at great cost to the country. The ground has to be carefully prepared, trees are hewn down in the hot season, and left to dry up in the blazing sun. The whole patch of garden is covered over with these trees and the branches, then when the first clouds appear, the wood is fired. For a day it blazes, and then during the gathering of the clouds the atmosphere is thick with the smoke of burning trees. The rains come and wash the carbon into the soil, and it makes an excellent fertiliser. But the crop exhausts the ground in two or three years, so another patch of [243]